

Meeting Summary
Southeast Alaska
Emergency Tow System Workgroup Meeting
January 10, 2011

Attendees:

Mark Janes, Nuka Research
Butch Miller, AMHS
Cheryl Fultz, SEAPRO
Dave Owings, SEAPRO
Margret Custer, SEAPRO
George Mahoney, SEAPRO
Jeff Shultz, SEAPRO
David Jancauskas, AMHS
John Brown, ADEC
Janmie Toxopeus, Canadian Coast
Guard
Kathy Hamblett, USCG
Mark Wagner, USCG
Mickey Sanders, USCG
Cliff Grand, USCG
Matt Odum, USCG

Bob Fultz, ADEC
Mark Wagner, USCG
Doug Hansen, SEAPA
Richard Grurry, SEAPA
Frank Didier, SEAPA
Robert Stromdahl, Burrard Clean Seas
Scott Tiernan, ADEC
Crystla Smith, ADEC
Frank Wesser, ADEC
Leslie Pearson, Pearson Consulting
Kirby Day, Princess Cruises
Drew Green, Survey Point Group
Tim Robertson, Nuka Research
Dave Eley, Alaska Steamship Response
Amy Gilson, Nuka Research
Stan Eliason, Sitka Harbormaster

Proceedings:

Tim Robertson opened the meeting and led the introductions. After the introductions, he outlined that the purpose of the project as the staging of an Emergency Tow System (ETS) in SE Alaska, the development of a state-wide operations manual that will have components specific to operations in SE Alaska and the planning and execution of a deployment in April or early May.

John Brown explained the background of project. He reported on the beginning of the program in Unalaska after the numerous grounding or near groundings of vessels in the Aleutians. The mayor of Unalaska, Shirley Marquardt, the Alaska Marine Pilots Association and the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation (ADEC) worked together to develop the program after gaining the support of the local tug companies, shippers and the USCG. The effort included exercises of the system and the development of a manual for operations in Unalaska. Many lessons were learned from the drills and included in the manual.

ADEC was able to obtain additional funding in the past year from the Coastal Impact Assistance Program. They purchased two additional 10' ETS. One will be stationed in Sitka to be deployed by the USCG Air Station Sitka and the other will be at Navy SupSal at Ft. Richardson in Anchorage.

John outlined the use of the ETS in the recent M/V Golden Seas incident. He reported that the deployment of the system went extremely well. The system was tested in extreme conditions and performed well. There will be a debrief between the participants in the incident to identify lessons learned and include them in the development of this project.

Tim led an overview of the exercise plan for deployment of the ETS in SE. The original plan was developed for Unalaska and will be modified to meet local conditions. Initially the exercise was planned for a May deployment in Sitka, but the input from the work group has lead the management team to consider other options that may present better opportunities to gain access to assets to use during the drill. The managers are open to further suggestions. The exact date and location of the drill will be worked out soon to allow for maximum participation.

Tim suggested that the exercise be completed in stages. Each stage will be managed by a stage coordinator under direction of an overall exercise director. He will be looking to the work group for assistance in coordinating the stages in SE Alaska. The collaborative workgroup process worked well in Unalaska and input is needed to make the drill a success and the entire ETS project a useful asset in SE Alaska.

A copy of the exercise plan reviewed is available on the project web page [here-
http://www.nukaresearch.com/projects/seakets/index.htm](http://www.nukaresearch.com/projects/seakets/index.htm).

John Brown pointed out potential places of refuge need to be considered during the drill as a component and referenced in the manual.

The meeting was opened up to for questions and comments:

Mark Wagner, USCG suggested the need to establish a date for planning. He mentioned that the USCG had already planned a training the week of April 18th.

Dave Eley pointed that currently SE AK doesn't have regularly scheduled freight ships. This present challenges in using these as ships to be towed in the drill. He reported that the Alaska Steamship Response with would like to be a sponsor in the exercise and use it for their annual drill requirement. This would involve likely future users of the tow system and gain credit for the companies participating.

Drew Green stated that the Cruise Line Agencies are willing to work with the group to provide a tug and would like to see the drill be for credit as well. He pointed out that May is an intensive work time for available assets, but is still possible. April in Juneau would be preferred.

Mark Wagner reported on problems with scheduling due to a USCG response drill April 18. He would need the date soon to begin securing and scheduling assets.

Scott Tiernan brought up International Oil Spill Conference is in late-May and this considered when scheduling. He also brought up the concern of the freighters transiting to Greens Creek Mine in Hawk Inlet could be included in the drill or at least be involved in the process.

Kathy Hamblett pointed out a Maritime Security Exercise to be held on the April 12-13 would create conflicts. She agreed with Mr. Tiernan's input regarding Greens Creek Mine and engaging the freighters to participate.

Frank Didier had questions regarding the type of vessel that would be used. Capt. Didier discussed the other possible issues that can emerge with unfamiliar vessels/crews, such as language barrier, that are common obstacles. He also put forth the possibility of using a cruise ship in deploying the system without towing the vessel. This affords the opportunity to educate these crews and explore what issues may emerge.

Drew Green cited the intensity of the schedules and cost concerns with the cruise industry, but will follow up with the industry. He pointed out difficulty of engaging the cargo ships using Greens Creek; uncertain scheduling, weather concerns, tidal restraints, but there are usually tugs available.

Bruce Miller brought up issues regarding the functional requirements for the program. Things to consider: inspection of the equipment, frequency of maintenance, qualifications of a safety officer. Tim reported that some of these issues have been addressed in the Unalaska manual but would look forward to additional input.

Dave Jancaukas requested the inclusion of someone with a high level of experience as a towing master. He feels that they will bring important knowledge of these operations.

John Brown pointed out the need for inclusion of tug operators, Drew Green offered to assist in providing contacts of tug operators.

Richard Gurry pointed to the extensive history and experience of the SEAPA pilots with the tug industry. The organization has 53 pilots and will volunteer to extent possible to assist in the development of the project. Tim pointed to the pilots as critical to the success of the project.

John Brown discussed damage liability incurred during the use of the system. There hasn't been an issue thus far from the recent deployment, cost have been recovered from the responsible party. It would be good to have further clarification as this program is developed. The state is the owner of the package and makes it available on an "as is" basis. There are Good Samaritan Laws that would address many of the liability concerns.

Mr. Brown discussed the storage and maintenance of the system. They are easy to maintain, but require some effort to repack after deployment. There is a need for cleaning and inspection before re-packaging.

Mr. Robertson reviewed the workgroup process and project website. The workgroup will be directing the process and giving input for the developing the SE ETS. The group will have to continue to meet via webconference prior to the drill due to costs of travel. Nuka Research will continue to support and be available to workgroup members in accessing the webconferencing system.

Action Items:

- Confirm participation of your organization in the project– All Participants.
- Identify the best dates for your organization to participate in the exercise – All Participants.
- Identify preferred location for your organization– All Participants.
- Provide contact for tug operators - Drew Green.
- Contact operators of the cargo vessels taking cargo from Greens Creek Mine and invite them to participate – Mark Janes.

Final Comments:

John Brown encouraged participants to review the manual and give input to reflect conditions in SE AK. Hard copies are available upon request from Nuka.

Bob Fultz would like to see about the availability of an ETS package in Ketchikan as there is significant traffic through the Dixon Entrance.

Dave Eley noted the importance of inclusion of the pilots. The earliest that a cruise ship could participate is early May. He pointed that a cruise ship captain may have concern regarding helo operations but maybe available for a tug to ship deployment.

Frank Didier expressed concerns that due to constrictions of the inland waters in Southeast the response times are constrained and that having the ETS in Sitka may not give enough lead time for responding in all situations. In response, John Brown pointed that as additional funding can be located more ETS may be staged, but Sitka was the most central and had the infrastructure with the USCG. Capt. Didier pointed to further education of tug companies to enhance the system possibly using their assets in tow operations.

Dave Owings wanted to understand the SEAPRO's role. Mr. Robertson offered that they would likely be on stand-by with any deployment. John Brown pointed out that they maybe helpful in maintenance and repackaging of the system as a contractor.

General consensus was that the project would be a valuable asset in SE Alaska and that people and organizations are looking forward to additional information and participating in the process.

Tim Robertson ended the meeting noting that the exercise would be in three months and addition workgroup meetings would be needed. He offered that the second week in

Southeast Alaska Emergency Tow Workgroup Meeting

February would be a good date for the next meeting of the entire workgroup, but the date will be finalized through email.